

## THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

DR. TALMAGE PREACHES ON THE  
SUNDIAL OF AHAB.The Shadows Are Controlled by the  
Hand of Omnipotence—Time's Flight  
Marked by the Sunbeams—Daybreak on  
the Mountain Tops.

Brooklyn, Jan. 15.—Dr. Talmage's sermon this morning was full of brightness and good cheer. He might have called it a recipe for happiness. The buoyancy and elasticity of temperament which characterize him were conspicuous throughout, and must have been imparted to his hearers. His text was II Kings xxi. 18. "And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the king, and said, 'Behold, the shadow of the sun is turned backward by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahab.'"

Here is the first clock or watch or chronometer or timepiece of which the world has any knowledge. But it was a watch that did not tick and a clock that did not strike. It was a sundial, Ahab, the king, invented it. Between the hours given in statecraft and the cares of office he invented something by which he could tell the time of day. This sundial may have been a great column, and when the shadow of that column reached one point it was nine o'clock a. m., and when it reached another point it was three o'clock p. m., and all the hours and half hours were so measured. Or it may have been a flight of stairs such as may now be found in Hindostan and other old countries, and when the shadow reached one step it was ten o'clock a. m., or another step it was four o'clock p. m., and likewise other hours may have been indicated.

## THE WORLD'S HOROLOGES.

The clepsydra or water clock followed the sundial, and the sand glass followed the clepsydra. Then came the candle clock of Alfred the Great and the candle was marked into three parts, and while the first part was burning he gave himself to religion, and while the second part was burning he gave himself to politics, and while the third part was burning he gave himself to rest. After awhile came the wheel and weight clock, and Pope Sylvester the Second was its most important inventor. And the skill of centuries of exquisite mechanism told at the timepieces until the world had the Vicks' clock of the fourteenth century and Huyghens, the inventor, swung the first pendulum and Dr. Hooke contrived the recoil escapement. And the "endless chain" followed and the "ratchet and pinion lever" took its place, and the compensation balance and the stem-wind followed, and now we have the buzz and clang of the great clock and watch factories of Switzerland and Germany and England and America turning out what seems to be the perfection of timepieces. It took the world six thousand years to make the present chronometer. So with the measurement of longer spaces than minutes and hours. Time was calculated from new moon to new moon, then from harvest to harvest. Then the year was pronounced to be three hundred and fifty-four days and then three hundred and sixty days, and not until a long while after three hundred and sixty-five days. Then events were calculated from the foundation of Rome, afterward from the Olympic games. Then the Babylonians had their measurement of the year and the Romans theirs and the Armenians theirs and the Hindus theirs. Chronology was busy for centuries studying monuments, inscriptions, coins, mummies and astronomical, trying to lay a plan by which all question of dates might be settled and events put in their right place in the procession of the ages. But the chronologists only heaped up a mountain of confusion and bewilderment until in the sixth century Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman abbot, made a new reckoning date from the birth of Bethlehem of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. The abbot proposed to have things dated backward and forward from that great event. What a splendid thought for the world! What a mighty thing for Christianity! It would have been most natural to date everything from the creation of the world. But I am glad the chronologists could not too easily guess how old the world was in order to get the nations in the habit of dating from that occurrence in its documents and histories. Forever fixed by that all history is to be dated with reference to the birth of Christ, and this matter settled, Hales, the chief chronologist, declared that the world was made five thousand four hundred and eleven years before Christ, and the deluge came three thousand one hundred and fifty-five years before Christ, and all the illustrious events of the last nineteen centuries and all the great events of all time to come have been or shall be dated from the birth of Christ. These things I say that you may know what a watch is, and a clock is, what an almanac is, and learn to appreciate through what toils and hardships and perplexities the world came to its present convenience and comfort, and to help you to more respectful consideration of that sundial of Ahab planted in its text.

## THE APPLICATIONS OF HEZEKIAH.

We are told that Hezekiah the king was dying of a boil. It must have been one of the worst kind of carbuncles, a boil with out any central core and sometimes deathful. A fig was put upon it as a poultice. Hezekiah did not want to die then. His son, who was to take the kingdom, had not yet been born, and Hezekiah's death would have been the death of the nation. So he prays for recovery and is told he will get well. But he wants some miraculous sign to make him sure of it. He has the choice of having the shadow on the sundial of Ahab advance or retreat. He replied it would not be so wonderful to have the sun go down, for it always does go down sooner or later. He asks that it go backward. In other words, let the day instead of going on toward sundown, turn and go toward sunrise. I see the invalid king bolstered up and wrapped in blankets looking out of the window upon the sundial in the courtyard. While he watches the shadow on the dial the shadow begins to retreat. Instead of going on toward six o'clock in the evening it goes back toward six o'clock in the morning. The big poultice had been drawing for some time, and sure enough the boil broke and Hezekiah got well. Now I expect you will come out with your higher criticism and try to explain this away and say it was an optical delusion of Hezekiah, and the shadow only seemed to go back or a cloud came over the sun and as Hezekiah expected it to go back he took the notion of his own mind for the retrograde movement. No, the shadow went back on all the dials of that land and other lands. Turn to II Chronicles xxxii. 31, and find that away off in Babylon the mighty men of the palace noticed the same phenomenon. And if you do not like Bible authority turn over your copy of Herodotus and find that away off in Egypt the people noticed that there was something the matter with the sun. The fact is that the whole universe waits upon God, and sun and moon and stars

are not very big things to men, and he can with his little finger turn back an entire world as easily as you could set back the hour hand or minute hand of your clock or watch.

## THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

At the opening of the new year people are moralizing on the flight of time. You all feel that you are moving on toward sundown and many of you are under a consequent depression. I propose this morning to set the hands on your watches and clocks to go the other way. I propose to show you how you may make the shadow of your dial like the shadow on the dial of Ahab to stop going forward and make it go backward. You think I have a big undertaking on hand, but it can be done if the same Lord who reversed the shadow in Hezekiah's courtyard moves upon us. While looking at the sundial of Hezekiah we find the shadow retreating we ought to learn that God controls the shadows. We are all ready to acknowledge his management of the sunshine. We stand in the glow of a bright morning and we say in our feelings if not with so many words, "This life is from God, this warmth is from God." Dr. we have a rush of prosperity and we say, "These successes are from God." What a providential thing it is I bought that lot just before the rise of real estate! How grateful to God I am that I made that investment! Why, they have declared 10 per cent. dividend! What a mercy it was that I sold out my shares before that collapse! Oh, yes, we acknowledge God in the sunshine of a bright day or the sunshine of a great prosperity. But suppose the day is dark? You have to light the gas at noon. The sun does not show himself all day long. There is nothing but shadow. How slow we are to realize that the storm is from God and the darkness from God and the chill from God. Or we buy the day before the market's retreat, or we make an investment that never pays, or we purchase goods that we cannot dispose of, or a crop of grain we sowed is ruined by drought or frost, or when we took account of stock on the 1st of January we found ourselves thousands of dollars worse off than we expected. Who under such circumstances says, "This loss is from God. I must have been allowed to go into that unfortunate enterprise for some good reason, God controls the east wind as well as the west wind!"

## GOD CONTROLS THE SHADOWS.

My friends, I cannot look for one moment on that retrograde shadow on Ahab's dial without learning that God controls the shadows and that lesson we need all to learn. That he controls the sunshine is not so necessary a lesson, for anybody can be happy when things go right. When you sleep eight hours a night and rise with an appetite that cannot easily wait for food, and you go over to the store and open your mail to read more orders than you can fill, and in the next letter you find a dividend far larger than you have been promised, and your neighbor comes in to tell you some flattering thing he has just heard said about you, and you find that all the styles of goods in which you deal have advanced 15 per cent. in value, and on your way home you meet your child in a full romp and there are roses on the center of the tea table and roses of health in cheeks all around the table, what more do you want of consolation? I don't pity you a bit. You feel as if you could boss the world. But for those in just opposite circumstances my text comes in with an omnipotence of meaning. The shadow! Oh, the shadow! Shadow of bereavement! Shadow of sickness! Shadow of bankruptcy! Shadow of mental depression! Shadow of persecution! Shadow of death! Speak out, oh, sundial of Ahab, and tell all the people that God manages the shadow! As Hezekiah sat in his palace window wrapped in invalidism and surrounded by anodynes and cataplasms and looked out upon the black hand of the only clock known at that time and saw it move back ten degrees he learned a lesson that a majority of the human race need this hour to learn—that the best friend a man ever had controls the shadow. The setbacks are sometimes the best things that can happen. The great German author, Schiller, could not work unless he had in his room the scent of rotten apples, and the decay of the fruits of earthly prosperity may become an inspiration instead of a depression. Robert Chambers, I remember, shut him up from other work, and he became the world renowned publisher, and helped fashion the best literature of the ages. The painful disorder like that of Hezekiah called a carbuncle is spelled exactly the same as the precious stone called the carbuncle, and the pang of suffering may become the jewel of immortal value. Your setback, like that of Ahab's sundial, may be recovery and triumph, never has a setback, but it turned out to be a set forward. You never would have become a Christian if you had not had a setback. The highest thrones in heaven are set from the setbacks. In 1861 the shadow of the sundial of this nation was set back, and all things seemed going to ruin, and it was set back further in 1862, and further in 1863, and will further in 1865, but there is not an intelligent and well-balanced man north or south, east or west—but feels it was set back toward the sunrise.

But I promise to show you how the shadows might be turned back. First, by going much among the young people. In most family circles there are grandchildren. By this divine arrangement most of the people who have passed the meridian of life can compass themselves by juvenility. It is a bad thing for an old man or old woman to sit looking at the vivacity of their grand children shouting, "Stop that racket!" Better join in the fun. Let the eighty-year-old grandfather join the eight-year-old grandson or granddaughter. My father and mother lived to see over eighty children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, and a more boisterous crew were never turned out on this subinary sphere, and they all seemed to cry to the old folks, "Keep young," and they did keep young. Don't walk with a cane unless you have to, only as a defense in a city afflicted with too many canines. Don't wear glasses stronger than necessary, putting on number tens when eighteens will do as well. Don't go into the company of those who are always talking about rheumatism and lumbago and shortness of breath and the brevity of human life. It is too much for my gravity to hear an octogenarian talking about the shortness of human life. From all I can find out he has always been here and from present prospects he is always going to stay. Remain young, I have said, by always talking about being old and wishing for the good old days, which were never so good as these days. From all I can find out the grandchildren are not as bad as the grandparents were. Many have been in a room adjoining a room

## SET BACK THE CLOCK.

Set back the clock of human life. Make the shadow of the sundial of Ahab retreat ten degrees. People make themselves old by always talking about being old and wishing for the good old days, which were never so good as these days. From all I can find out the grandchildren are not as bad as the grandparents were. Many have been in a room adjoining a room

where some very old people, a little deaf, were talking over old times, you will find that this age does not monopolize all the young people. It may now be hard to get young people up early enough in the morning, but their grandparents always had to be pulled out of bed. It is wrong now to play mischievous tricks on the unsuspecting, but eighty years ago at school that now venerable man sat down on a crooked pin not accidentally placed there, and purposely drove the sleigh riding party too near the edge of the embankment that he might see how they would look when tumbled into the snow. And that man who has so little patience with childish exuberance was in olden times up to pranks, one-half of which practiced by the eight-year-old of today would set grandfather and grandmother crazy. Revive your remembrance of what you were between five and ten years of age, and with patience capable of everything join with the young. Put back the shadow of the dial not ten degrees, but fifty and sixty and seventy degrees.

Set back your clocks also by entering on new and absorbing Christian work. In our desire to inspire the young we have in our essays had much to say about what has been accomplished by the young, of Romulus, who founded Rome when he was twenty years of age, of Cortes, who had conquered Mexico at thirty years; of Pitt, who was prime minister of England at twenty-four years; of Raphael, who died at thirty-seven years; of Calvin, who wrote his "Institutes" at twenty-six; of Melancthon, who took a learned professor's chair at twenty-one years; of Luther, who had conquered Germany for the Reformation by the time he was thirty-five years. And it is all very well for us to show how early in life one can do very great things for God and the welfare of the world, but some of the mightiest work for God has been done by septuagenarians and octogenarians and nonagenarians. Indeed, there is work which none but such can do. They preserve the equipoise of sciences, of religious denominations, of reformatory movements. Young men for action, old men for counsel. Instead of any of you beginning to fold up your energies, arouse anew your energies. With the experience you have obtained and the opportunities of observation you have had during a long life, you ought to be able to do in one year now more than you did in ten years ago. You have had passed out of your teens. Physical power less, your spiritual power ought to be more. Up to the last hour of their lives what power for good old Dr. Archibald Alexander, old Dr. Woods, old Dr. Hawes, old Dr. Milnor, old Dr. McVaine, old Dr. Tyng, old Dr. Candlish, old Dr. Chalmers! What have been Bismarck to Germany, and Gladstone to England, and Oliver Wendell Holmes to America in the time of an advanced age? Let me say to those in the afternoon of life: Don't be putting off the harness, when God wants it off he will take it off. Don't be frightened out of life by the grip as many are. At the first sneeze of an influenza many give up all as lost. No new fear has come on the earth. The microbes as the cause of disease were known to us in the time of the ancients, and there are no invisible legions of dangerous ones. Don't be scared out of life by all this talk about heart failure. That trouble has always been in the world. That is what all the people that ever passed out of this life have died of—heart failure. Adam had it and all of his descendants have had it or will have it. Do not be watching for symptoms, or you will have symptoms of everything. Some of you will get old symptoms. Symptoms are often only what we sometimes see in the country—a dead owl nailed on a barn door to scare living owls. Put your trust in God, go to bed at ten o'clock, have the window open six inches to let in the fresh air, sleep on your right side, and fear nothing. The old maxim was right, "Get thy spine and distaff ready, and God will send the flax."

"I SEE THE SHADOW MOVE." But while looking at this sundial of Ahab and I see the shadow of it move, I notice that it went back toward the sunrise instead of forward toward the sunset—toward the morning instead of toward the night. That thing the world is willing now to do, and in many things has done. There have been a great many times when ten and spoken about the sunset of life. I have said some of them myself. But my text suggests a better idea. The Lord who turned back that day from going toward sundown and started it toward sunrise is willing to do the same thing for all of us. The theologians who stick to old religious technicalities until they become soporifics should call it a turning back of sunset. I call it a change from going toward sundown to going toward sunrise. That man who never tries to unbutton the clasp of evil habit and who keeps all the sins of the past and the present freighting him and who ignores the one redemption made by the only one who could redeem, if that man will examine the sundial he will find that the shadow is going forward and he is on the way to sundown. His day is on the road to night. All the watches that tick, all the clocks that strike, all the sand glasses that empty themselves, all the shadows that move on all the sundials indicate the approach of darkness. But now, in answer to prayer, as in my text the change was in answer to prayer, the pardoning Lord reverses things, and the man starts toward sunrise instead of sunset. He turns the other way. The captain of salvation gives him the military command, "Attention! Right about face!" He was marching toward indifference, marching toward hardness of heart, marching toward prayerlessness, marching toward sin, marching toward gloom, marching toward death. Now he turns and marches toward peace, marches toward comfort, marches toward hope and marches toward a triumph stupendous and everlasting, toward hosannas that ever hoist and hallelujahs that ever roll. Now if that is not the turning of the shadow on the dial of Ahab from going toward sundown to going toward sunrise, what is it?

## DAYBREAK ON THE MOUNTAINS.

I have seen day break over Mount Blanc and the Matterhorn, over the heights of Lebanon, over Mount Washington, over the Sierra Nevada, and mid-Atlantic, the morning after a departed storm when the billows were liquid Alps and liquid Sierra Nevada, but the sunrise of the soul is more effulgent and more transporting than dawn on the heights of the soil, and illumines all the depths of the soul, and whelms all the faculties, all the aspirations, all the ambitions, all the hopes with a light that sickness cannot eclipse, or death extinguish, or eternity do anything but augment and magnify. I preach the sunrise. As I look at that retrograde movement of the shadow on Ahab's dial, I remember that it was a sign that Hezekiah was going to get well and he got well. So I have to tell all who are by the grace of God having your day turned from decline toward night to ascent toward morning, that you are going to get well, well of all your sins, well of all your sorrows, well of all your earthly distresses. Sunrise!

But, says some one, all that you say may be true, but that doesn't hinder the barren

of dissolution. Why, you who are the Lord's are not going to die. All that the grave gets of you as compared with your chief, your immortal nature, is as the clippings of your finger nails as compared with your whole body. As you run the scissors along the edge of your thumb nail and cut off that which is of no use but rather a hindrance, you do not mourn over the departure of that fragment which flies away. Death will be only the scissoring off of that which could be of no use, and the soul has no funeral over that which would be an awful nuisance if we could not get rid of it. This body as it now is, what a failure it would make of heaven if our departing soul had to be burdened with it in the next world. While others there go ten thousand miles a minute we would take about an hour to walk four miles, and while our neighbor immortals could see a hundred miles we could see only ten miles, and the fleetest and the healthiest of our bodies if seen there would make it necessary to open in heaven an asylum for cripples. No, no; one of the best possible things that will happen to us will be the sloughing off of this body when we have no more use for it in its present state. When it shall come up in its resurrected form we will be very glad to get it back again, but not as it is now with its limitations and bedwardsments innumerable. Sunrise!

There shall I bathe my weary soul  
In seas of heavenly rest,  
And not a wave of trouble roll  
Across my peaceful breast.

Sunrise! But not like one of those mornings after you had gone to bed late, or did not sleep well, and you get up chilled and yawning and the morning bath is a repulsion and you feel like saying to the morning sun shining into your window, "I do not see what you find to smile about; your brightness is to me a mockery." But the inrush of the next world will be a morning after a sound sleep, a sleep that nothing can disturb, and you will rise, the sunshine in your face; and in your first morning in heaven you will wade down into the sea of glass mingled with fire, the foam of fire with a splendor you never saw on earth, and the rolling waves are dogologies, and the rocks of that shore are golden and the pebbles of that beach are pearls, and the skies that arch the scene are a commingling of all the colors that St. John saw on the wall of heaven—the crimson, and the blue and the saffron, and the orange, and the purple, and the gold, and the green wrought on those skies in shape of garlands, of banners, of ladders, of chariots, of crowns, of thrones. What a sunrise! Do you not feel its warmth on your faces? Seeville McCollum, the dying boy of our Sunday school, uttered what shall be the perfection of this sermon, "Throw back the shutters and let the sun in." And so the shadow of Ahab's sundial turns from sunset to sunrise.

## NO FLIRTING AT PRAYER MEETINGS.

One Lewiston girl believes that prayer meetings are not the place for flirtations and pairing off. She has known what it is to expect one or two men waiting at the church door every Sunday night with the question whether or no he may go home with her. She has determined to rid herself of both, and probably has. She went to the cake walk in Lyceum hall Saturday night, and during the evening both asked permission to escort her home. She said yes to both. They both waited for her on the landing, and when she came down stairs she smiled and took one of each young man's arms.

At first they hesitated a little, but then went down the last flight of stairs at a jerky gait. At the foot of the stairs they both let go her arm and walked up Lisbon street, looking ugly at each other. She entertained them both with lively stories of the evening's entertainment. Each thought that the other would drop off at the head of the street and he would go home with the pretty girl; but they both went on up Main street, wishing their inmost hearts that they were out of it. What a fool the other fellow was! Why didn't he leave?

In the meantime they went past corner after corner where each thought surely the other would say good night, for had not the girl said he might go home with her? So on they went until the gates were closed, and with a pretty thought about the effect of the moon on dried leaves in the gutter she asked them both in. They both said it was late and looked nervous. "Can't you both come up and see me Thursday evening?" she asked. "Mamma would be pleased to meet you."

## Mme. Barrios.

New York society is again busy talking of the reported engagement of Mme. Barrios to Senor Martinez de Roda, a member of the Spanish Cortes from Greanda. Such an event would add to the deep interest taken in the beautiful widow's romantic history. Mme. de Barrios was the daughter of Francisco Aparicio, a wealthy coffee planter of Quenatanango, the second city of importance in the republic of Guatemala. When she was fourteen years old General de Barrios espied her one day and fell violently in love with the beautiful young girl. The common story is that the girl rebelled. And then, too, her parents objected to the match. She was whisked off to a mountain convent by the general. The next move the dictator made was to elope with her father into jail. The prisoner was informed that he could remain there until his pretty daughter became Mme. de Barrios. However that may be, she certainly did become the dictator's wife at a tender age and some of her friends say the story of abduction and marriage by force was all romance. At any rate she was devoted to the general and ever since his death has been devoted to numerous children, only four of whom are her own. When the trouble arose between Guatemala and her neighbors Mme. de Barrios escaped to San Francisco. The general fell on the field of battle. His widow eventually settled in New York.—Philadelphia Press.

## Interplanetary Signaling.

At its most favorable oppositions, Mars is still 42,000,000 miles from us, or a hundred and sixty times farther than the moon; while the diameter of its disk is only twenty-five inches. According to Schiaparelli, the smallest objects visible on its surface under the most favorable circumstances—such as a bright spot on a dark ground, or a dark spot on a bright ground—must have a diameter equal to a fiftieth part of that of the planet, or about eighty-five miles. This minimum can, it is true, be reduced by using large objectives per mitting stronger magnifying; but even then it is certain that luminous signals, for example, visible from the earth on Mars, must have enormous dimensions.—A Guillemin in Popular Science Monthly.

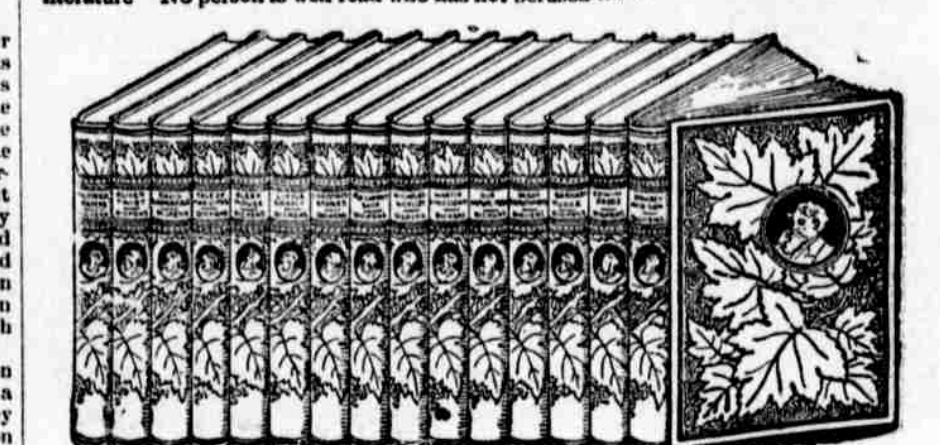
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